

***Mirrored Experience: A Poetic Exploration***

**An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)**

**by**

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## **Abstract**

Poetry has been around for a while now, so naturally it can be difficult to find something new to say. Stereotypes have formed: the Shakespearean sonnet, the flowery love letter voice, fantastical images and ideas—while these are indeed their own forms, they are not the be all end all of poetry. At its base, poetry is writing about the world in ways that differ from the typical journal page. However, there is another stereotype tied to the writing of poetry: sitting at a desk, separated from the world. My intention here was to write poetry that breaks the “classical” standards or at least bends them in directions perhaps not deemed as “normal.” In addition, I have decided to pair up differing experiences to provide a needed sense of contrast found within typical life. While I am not and will never be universal, I have tried to make my poetry as familiar yet strange, whimsical yet stern, and approachable yet complex in my take on living experience.

## **Acknowledgements**

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I would also like to thank my parents Buddy and Regina Tekulve for supporting me in all my creative endeavors, whether through lengthy phone conversations or “motivational packages.”

Finally, I would like to thank every professor I’ve had in my four years at Ball State University for helping me grow as a writer, student, and overall citizen.

## Process Analysis Statement

When it comes to describing *how* this poetry was made, I feel like there's not quite as much to say. I have my laptop, my mind, and the experiences I intend to write about. It's about as simple as I could get in something creative. Research was entirely direct—basically everything that is written is a result of my own primary experiences. Although, in today's culture, it's difficult (if not rather impossible) to not have some semblance of society rubbing off onto my work. It's inescapable. I make references where I feel they make sense, where I think some kind of joke would work well, where I simply thought of something that just *fit*. Calling poetry objective, in my opinion, is a near total fabrication, and I believe my work showcases that. It's a subjective process that involves the writer and what they want to write about.

However, it feels dismissive to just say that and call it done. I will admit that my original intentions were clouded and pushed back by life itself: work, financial stresses, and other such dramatic episodes drained my drive and will to even perform some remedial tasks. But I have persevered in the end, and I wrote to the best of my ability. In my original statement, I had said something to the degree of writing for "universal" themes, but as a white male graduating college student I feel like my view of the world is perhaps a little limited. That isn't to say that it hasn't been broadened by my experiences in the Honors College and English Department here at BSU, but—barring the experiential learning semester I had the spring of 2016—my perspective is simply limited due to my relatively safe environment. As for the poetry itself, however, I believe it is up to the standards I have set for myself, as potentially strange as they may be.



And to be quite honest, that's the majority of what I can say about my poetry sampling here. I did my best to hold to my original plan and write about experiences as I participated in them, but time and mental constraints held that original vision back a bit. I enjoyed writing them, as I always do to varying lengths—it's the creation itself that I enjoy. If I make confusing references or jokes that don't make sense to someone, that's okay. If my poetry isn't what someone expects out of poetry, even better. It's all about the fun of writing: rambling, metaphors, similes, imagery—it all adds up to an experience that I thoroughly enjoy. And I hope I can convey that to others simply by showing them and letting them read.

"I'll have an order of disorder"

a chesty existence full of nothing but  
late 1980 Reagans pounding at my Gorbachevs—  
my breastbone and all the flesh around there

something something stereotypical  
Indiana race cars 500 racing bullshit my  
head can't escape can't win this race

no matter how many laps whoever's in  
first place driving the Lightspeedomatic already  
finished the whole damn race before I began

but it was important, pivotal, essential  
that I place in this race  
monthsyearsdecades of tutorialized living

haircuts are too expensive—desperate, grasping  
hands will do the same job at a fraction  
of the economic cost

"getawaycation"

following the trek of tires/asphalt and  
following the mirrorstaring pastime  
and following the head-induced ceiling-dwellers

it's done  
for a week

my sequoia collapsing into an appropriate bed  
of paper leaves and formulated dirt and  
sticks and rivers  
and the stray fellow tree

the roots aren't pulled up yet—still work to  
be worked on, forms to fill, races  
to sign up for

but the obese foreigner has yet to pipe up  
and thus the rings can keep growing  
undoubtedly for dissection at a later date

not to say she won't bellow out a terrible tune  
sooner or later, but

for now  
for a week

just painted grass  
metal wind  
and stained-glass  
blue sky



"Procrastor (slow-release capsule)"

Take one orally daily, when you remember. At least by 11:59pm of the day you're supposed to take it. May take 1-72 hours to take effect due to new capsule nanobot technologies.

Treats: Worrying in the short-term, important projects, boredom, and sense of progress.

Do not take with other similar drugs such as Gameclyn, Browsitonin, or Reddilin as it may enhance the effects to undesired levels.

Do not take with alcohol. Take only with uncarbonated water or flat, month-old, caffeine-free soft drinks.

See our ad in *Game Informer* for more information.

Side effects may include: Worrying in the long-term, putting things off to the last second, stress, hair loss, fatigue, anxiety, depression, overeating disorder, misdiagnosis of other illnesses, failure to meet societal standards, and illusion of sense of progress.

If you experience any of these side effects or others, contact your doctor

eventually.

"Gradmecil (tablet)"

Take one orally during the month of May, July, or December, depending on preference. Effects should start sooner than you had originally planned for. It will feel as though you took the pill a while ago and it took at least four years to take effect.

Treats: Potential for career instability, anxiety, depression, sense of place, side effects of Procrastor, parental disapproval.

Recommended to take alongside similar medications such as Internital, Resumection, and Experilin to enhance expected results.

See our ad in *Time* for more information.

Side effects may include: Uncertainty, nervousness, anxiety, depression, thoughts of wasted opportunity, and parental disapproval.

If you experience any of these side effects or others, contact your doctor to invite them to your party.

(Polished wood frame with glass cover and wall-hanging fixtures included.)



"ranchnut butterdip"

Green slivers of fiber stacked  
on a platter surrounded by hungry-  
hungry hippo-pot-am-usses but—  
apparently—a single portion of the  
peanutbutterless stringstick can  
cause cancer, or at least  
kill you.

So a pool of nonrubber redballs (that  
are more ovular than most balls) perhaps  
could solve the age-old question of  
eating a stack of printer paper or maybe  
soaking it in sugarwater for a minute  
beforehand—but that's silly.

So, maybe, a doctor-disapproved miniplanet,  
possibly reddish *or* greenish, mind you, could  
do the job—but no, there's worms cosplaying  
Dune in that there crisp flesh.

So what's a hippo to do?

Embrace the wiggleness and just  
get a sack of sugarcruised,  
artificiality-approved,  
manufactured cornstarch.

"barely mooink anymore"

ding-dong, hi there, wanna buy some  
greased cow between two fakebread  
disks and yellow soy protein, potentially gluten  
free or gluten-laden depending on your prefs?

no?

how about some crusty old bread crumbled  
into a heap of powdered bags dusted  
like salt on the sidewalk just before snow  
onto potentially abused oink-oinks converted  
into protein patties for your consumption?

still no?

how about we bastardize a culture's cuisine  
and call it "Americanized" and sell it for  
half as much as the mum-n-dad shop  
across the pond?

really? still don't want that?

how about some fast food?

jeez man no need to rip my arms off  
(they might become a burger)

"Outside Atrium – Winter"

as one might say,  
"it's fucking cold"

but there's not really anyone here—  
save for the spare student giving me  
a strange stare as I stutter—  
nor any plant that isn't in a state  
of physical preservation or possibly  
degradation

bodywarming the coldmetal chair  
brisk wind whispering in my ear,  
"why are you out here you idiot"

because I thought it would be fun  
to sit outside in the middle of winter  
and finally have somewhere to sit  
[near] the Atrium



"Outside Atrium – Spring"

tricklerocks and puddles of non-tears and  
actual trees flaring up the nostrils of  
unfortunates passing by—contrasted  
by the foreigners in their grainy pots

has it ever occurred how awkward  
it really must be for these fake ferns  
—assuming sentience—to preside in that  
purposefully noisome space

but it's still relatively chill, out away  
from the windowpanes and metal frames

the season succeeding winter is here, yet  
barely anyone wants to gobble grease  
outside

inside  
the taco salads reign  
supreme, paternal pizza,  
or religious chicken

away from the birds and  
the bees and the

various other metaphoric animals

"would get a Crave Case but that's a really bad idea for my bowels probably"

if ever there were a black hole found  
within a human, I am that human

thoughts meander and piddle and flutter  
about but always narrow down like a dart  
thrown by Robin in The Hood to the bullseye of  
I'M FUCKING HUNGRY

[something about physics and research and  
something intelligent about the state of body  
while it's in a state of hunger and causes a state  
of distress in the brain but I couldn't be  
arsed to do research because it's not my major]

now I'm not like some stereotypical commercial  
for saving the kids, the one with that creepy white-  
bearded guy always displaying a sad foreign child  
"omg look how hungry this fucker is give him  
a cheeseburger or something!!1!! wot? no I won't  
pay him in food for being exploited on national  
television that's juuuuust silllyyyyyyyyyyy"

NEW SCIENTIFIC BREAKTHROUGH THIS JUST IN  
NEWSFLASH LIVE STREAMING NOW FAILS COMPILATION  
YOU'LL NEVERBELIEVE WHATHAPPENSNEXT  
BUZZFEED YELLOW BUZZFEED BLUE BUZZFEED RAINBOW  
RED LOBSTER LOBSTERFEST CRAB LEMON JUICE  
FLAVORED DRINK THAT DOESN'T HAVE ANY  
ACTUAL JUICE IN IT:

hunger is only three letters  
away from anger<sup>1</sup>

1. See: hangry

"ugh"

fingers feel that much groggier  
like drizzled in molasses levels, I'm sayin here  
after shoving a myhead's worth of  
foodmatterdownthere  
whatsaspacebaragain  
ohits right there

if I saw a billboard for anything bodily consumable I'd just  
not want to look at the billboard anymore

Red Lobster only makes me think of aquariums

new story this just in:  
writing about levels of hunger  
is best done while somewhere in the  
half of "more hangry than feeling like  
an obese beached whale"



"what can yellow do for you?"

oh baby lord metaphorical jesus  
the dam is gonna leak and I don't have  
me a finger to help

instead of solving the solution I shall  
make strange concoctions of corruptions  
that stream into my h—that was a bad  
choice of words just now because stream

is another word for something that happens  
when you get to relieve the thing that builds  
up over the course of a day, although it does  
build up much faster if you drink a lot of water

and gues what I drik a lot of water and yes  
I'm ignoring any tyopos that word doesn't fix bec  
ause that's the goal of this pseudo poem thing  
right here wow we're getting pretty meta right  
now but

I believe, if I were getting workshopped right now  
that many people would say "your imagery is lacking" and  
I' djust be like "well oka y dudes but if you really want some of the imagery that im  
thinking right now I think youd regret your decisions almost instantatiously ly wow okay  
I hitnk

tis'

about time

to answer the call

hello yes this is toilet

"hopefully more than brown can"

thankfully toilet answered the call and  
I can return to dutifully correcting errors  
in

## REAL TIME

although the unfortunate part of written work  
is that it's never really live unless you stream it

simplicity of bodily functions reveals itself when  
I just noticed how "stream" didn't get my groin in a fuss like  
an incorrect bicycle seat [note I have never partaken  
in the process of bicycle learnings but have heard  
the tales of crotch-related mishappenings on bikes]

is it all unicorns wearing labcoats to know  
relieving oneself of a natural buildup or deterioration  
actually causes *relief*?

a strange world this would be  
if in order to for us to pee,  
we'd always feel pain—

"with a chance"

digits delving into the darkbrown forest—  
someone left the greaseplants on overnight

fairly sure skin surfaces aren't supposed  
to sheen like a McDouble bun either  
(or smell faintly like one, at that)

the upper upside-down V residents  
also claim to be experiencing their own  
residual case of scented yet invisible  
smog in their crimed streets

Light: flicked on  
Fan: knob turned to "high" setting  
Clothing: [Censored]

*Hi this is Fake Al Roker  
and there's a Rain Dance  
in your area of the forest*



"ain't Noah much goin on here"

luckily the rainbow's promise seems not  
to have been made with crossed fingers  
and the cornchip risk factor is down the seafloor

the Tapestry of Dryness used for its intended purpose  
clothing returns to its proper state of lacking  
of need of black bars if I were on television

I've yet to put a hamburger bun in the shower  
but if it loses its sheen and general scent  
I'll make sure to inform the masses of my  
scent-ific breakthrough

and promptly proceed to purchase more  
of those scentstain diabetical sandwiches  
until another Dance is ultimately required

"stereotypical cowboy time"

disregarding solar cycles and the stray  
third-shift nocturnals in their caves—it's  
about the exact midpoint of waking hours

calories converted, papers (un)perfected, and  
anticipation of watching the gas hand go  
from F to E

it's already halfway there, halfway  
there halfway, there halfway there  
halfway, there, halfway there living on a  
modest part-time budget

while still managing to shovel mounds  
of angust beef and health-ridden  
translucent vegetable circles

idle thought:  
what did cowboys do if it  
were cloudy that day?

"stereotypical college student time"

tonight is already tomorrow  
and the eyelids' vacation locations are  
planed for the week

deeds are done, shade is  
all there is beyond the window glass  
spiderman villain just got into  
the mattress business and sells  
for cheap

not sure why he won't at least  
charge retail but I guess he  
prefers wholesale for  
his sleep

which should preferably occur  
within the hour, but the  
day is quite pubescent  
somewhere deep  
through the core and

...something about  
numbering sheep



"ownership of a cylindrical object"

chromatic address saved to the point  
that all you need is the "y" and "enter"  
keys on your little entertainment machine there  
(quite an expensive thing deemed "required")

but there it is  
at your whim, o emperor, you  
watch other *actual humans*  
or lack thereof just doing "enter"taining  
activities for your drool-pooling mouth

oh, no, O Master of the Pixels, you need  
not lift more than a finger—if that is  
acceptable in itself—to just "click"  
away at your ease

—but fuck that paper due tomorrow right?

you've gotta watch you some 1000 degree  
knives and explosions in slow motion and  
people yelling immaturities at each other  
because that's the intent  
of YourEmpire

"if Pong never happened 13-year-olds wouldn't have Call of Duty"

disc or digital, keys or buttons—  
either way eyes are gorilla'd to the glass

pixels no longer passively participating in  
some play, the fifth and sixth walls  
are being built just to be taken back  
down again

chestorgan pumping life into  
the technically inanimate

—but fuck that paper due tomorrow right?

you've got cars to drive, heroes to kill, villains  
to proclaim, numbers to increase, lives to  
live anywhere but here in this  
bossless dungeon

"father and"

Radiation sure  
feels pretty nice for being  
the cause of some deaths.

Just to imagine—  
globbs of energy just up  
and caused all of this.

But it can take it  
away just as easily  
as it first happened.

Distance is a key  
factor in survival—just  
don't stare too long, now.

Sunglasses are cool,  
but not if you needed them  
because you're stupid.

Soap probably won't  
cause blindness—unfortunate.  
Can't blame them today.

Just enjoy the rays.  
something something basking in  
the stereotypes



"precipitation fellow"

The sky decided to cry today.  
Surprisingly the town found it okay.  
A river overflowed,  
some cars just got towed,  
But the trees continued to sway.

Green leaves nowhere near Christmastime,  
flatter than the stout conebearing kind,  
catch all of the rain  
along their slight veins,  
and despite the intrusion, don't mind.

It's probably been this way for a while,  
water following green mile by mile.  
For if it were too much,  
balance would lose its touch,  
and the Earth would be a bit of a pile  
of shit